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A
LETTER
FROM
A MEMBER of the
University of OXFORD,
TO
A Gentleman in the Country, &c.



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LETTER

FROM
A MEMBER of the
University of OXFORD,
TO A
GENTLEMAN in the Country;

CONTAINING
A PARTICULAR ACCOUNT
OF A
WATCH-PLOT

Lately discovered there;
Together with some serious Reflections upon
the present Circumstances of that UNIVERSITY,
and the Conduct of its Enemies.

*Remember the Children of Edom, O Lord, in the Day
of Jerusalem, how they said, Down with it, Down
with it, even to the Ground, Ps. cxxxvii. 7.*

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THE
PREFACE.

THE Writer of the following Letter, it may easily be observed, is not so studious to obtain a Character for Elegance of Composition, as for the Honesty of his Heart and Intentions. He solemnly declares that the main Motive by which he is induced to publish it is a Zeal for the Honour of an University, which, notwithstanding the repeated

repeated Stabs she has lately received from some of her own Sons even now in her Bosom, is still in a fairer Way than she is generally thought to be. All Party-Spirit he utterly disavows and abhors; and if he has expressed himself rather warmly in one or two Passages, he desires it may be attributed to the above Motive; which it is hoped will not yet be thought to have carried him beyond the Bounds of Decency, much less beyond those of Truth. It may perhaps with some Justice be objected to him,

*Non tali Auxilio, nec Defensoribus
iftis*

Tempus eget:

That

That the present Circumstances of the University are such as seem to demand a publick Vindication of its Character from some authoritative Pen. But this, it is presumed, has been delay'd for prudential Reasons: And therefore, with a View to gratify, in some Measure, the general Impatience of seeing something from these Parts, the following Letter is published. To a candid Reader, the Hurry in which it was drawn up, will be a sufficient Apology for the Inaccuracies he will meet with in it. After the Writer had waited so long in Expectation of seeing the Cause undertaken by a more able Advocate, the Time would admit of no

formal

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formal and methodical Defence. If what he has here written shall answer the Purpose of stopping for a while the Voice of the Slanderer and Blasphemer, the Enemy and Avenger, he will think himself richly rewarded for the small Pains he has taken.

A

A

LETTER, &c.

*Oxford, Dec. 28, 1754.**Dear Sir,*

I AM very ready to gratify your Curiosity to know every Thing of Consequence that passes in this University: Because I am sensible that it is in you both a natural and a commendable Curiosity, and that you will not, as some others have done, make an ill Use of any Thing that shall be communicated to you from these Parts. You have often told me that you entertain a Kind of sacred Reverence for the Place to which you owe your Education; and indeed you have great Reason to do so: For that Education has made you an Ornament to your Pro-

B fession,

fession, and procured you a comfortable Subsistence for the Remainder of your Life. I could wish every one cherished the same grateful Sentiments of the invaluable Blessings they derive from hence. But the Account you sent me in your last, was not so surprizing to me as you seem'd to imagine it would be. The Gentlemen in your Neighbourhood, whose Names you mention, are not the only Instances of the Kind I have heard of, or met with; there are others who go a Step beyond them, who make a Merit of employing that very Eloquence which they owe to *Oxford* in set Harangues and bitter Invectives against it. Like the fabulous Giants of old, rebelliously exerting their *bodily* Strength against Heaven from whence they derived it *. These frequently descend even

* *Sed quid Typhoeus, & validus Mimas
Contra sonantem PALLADIS Ægida
Poffunt ruentes?* —

The former of these Heroes is aptly represented by Mr. *K—n—t* who, having originally sprung from a *D-ngh-ll*, may not improperly be called *Terræ Filius*. His Brother *Mr. Br—* may pass for

even to Fiction, and the grossest Misrepresentations of Facts; and if one may judge from their present Practices, would feel a savage Kind of Satisfaction, if by these Means they could destroy its very Being as an University. But in Spite of their wicked Arts, they have the Mortification to see it flourish daily. Young Gentlemen of Figure and Fortune are continually flowing in upon us. A plain Proof this of the Discipline, good Order, and Decency of Behaviour, kept up among us; which (as I told you long since) my Lord *Parker* was so honourable and ingenuous as to commend upon a late Occasion.

THE Baseness and Ingratitude of the Persons above hinted at, who thus rack their Inventions to ruin us, is certainly very unaccountable: But not more so

for the latter. Such Reflections on particular Persons, as seeming to imply private Resentment, it must be owned, when considered apart from Circumstances, are unjustifiable; and are here made with no other View but to set the Ingratitude of these Gentlemen in a stronger, and at the same Time in its proper, Light.

than the extreme Credulity, real or affected, of such as repose an implicit Confidence in every Report they hear to our Disadvantage. If Abuse of this University is with some People become a fashionable Topick of Conversation; it is no less fashionable with others to admit every new-invented Story against it as an incontestable Truth, I had almost said, as an Article of Political Faith. I myself, when I have been endeavouring to defend its Honour, when attack'd, in private Company, have heard it charged with still retaining the Essence of Popery in its publick Worship, and with a thousand other Things equally absurd, as with Facts that I could not pretend to deny or dissemble; but which, at the same Time, a Man would richly deserve to be laugh'd at, who should set himself seriously to refute.

ONE main End of my Correspondence with you is, that you may be able to vindicate the Character of this much-injured Place

Place upon all such Occasions as are mentioned above: And my Method has been to send you as plain Accounts as I could of Matters of Fact. The University stands in Need of no other Kind of Defence; for were Facts but clearly related, and set in their proper Light, without any Party-Glosses, or malicious Exaggerations, there could be no Room for Jealousies and Misunderstandings between us and our Superiors: And a certain Set of Men, whose Business and Interest it now is to foment them, might then perhaps find out a more laudable and honest Employment for their Talents. --- But I shall, without further Introduction, proceed to the Relation of an Affair which happened here lately, and which, (because it seems to be a strong Confirmation of what I have been saying) I was willing to take the first Opportunity of laying before you.

A FEW Days since a certain Gentleman of this Place, who thinks it no Impeachment of his Loyalty to his Majesty King GEORGE that he wishes well to my Lord

Wenman

Wenman and Sir James Dashwood, was reading a News-Paper at the Kitchen-Fire of a large publick House. There were two or three other Persons in the same Room; and one of them, one Mr. H--n--r, a matriculated Barber, came up to the first-mentioned Gentleman so employed, and desired him to lend him his Watch a Moment; a remarkably good one, made by Tompion. He immediately retired with it to a Corner of the Room, in Order (as the Gentleman supposed) to correct his own by it. He soon returned it: But the Gentleman, as he was replacing it in his Pocket, found that the Case was not secure, and (as it was natural) reproved Mr. H--n--r for putting his Watch into his Hand in that careless Manner. Then endeavouring to shut it, he found the Spring would not catch, and no sooner examined the Inside of the Case but he saw a small Picture, which he presently knew to be that of the young Pretender. He, immediately fired, taxed Mr. H--n--r with what he had done. Mr. H--n--r look'd

looked just as silly and confounded as you may suppose any other detected Villain to do, and with an affected Air of Indifference replied to this Effect: " Why, 'tis " a pretty little Picture, and I thought it " would please you better than me, and " so was willing to make you a Present " of it." The Gentleman made no Answer, but with a just and honest Indignation threw the Picture into the Fire, and flung out of the Room.

I DOUBT not, Sir, but your Imagination has prevented me in drawing a Parallel between this Affair and that of the infamous *Rag-Plot*. There is certainly a surprizing Resemblance of Features between them, that strikes one at first Sight. And had not this last Plot been crush'd in the Birth by the Unskilfulness of the Midwife, it might justly have been stiled the other's First-born. But as it has happened, I hope it will serve to convince those abroad, who are capable of being convinced, of the low and dishonest Artifices of some among

among us, who are most impiously and unnaturally labouring to raise themselves upon the Ruins of our *Alma Mater*. I will not compliment Mr. *H-n-r*'s Invention so far as to suppose he was the first Mover in this Busines. It may, I think, on the contrary, be taken for granted, that he acted only an Under-Part. Neither do I expressly charge any *Academick* with the Contrivance of this ingenious Plot. All I shall observe is, that this Mr. *H^r-n^er*, besides his Trade of a Barber, has the Honour to be Butler of *Exeter College*. The Gentlemen of that Society, I am told, affect to laugh it off, as a foolish trifling Affair, and to wonder why People should be alarmed at it. They blame their Servant indeed for his *Folly*, but are so extremely *charitable* in this Instance as to acquit him of any guilty Design. I will not pretend to judge Mr. *H-n-r*; he knows his own Heart best: But a plain Proof to me of a black Intention somewhere, is that some of his Friends have actually been with the affronted Gentle-

Gentleman, on Purpose to prevail with him, if possible, not to divulge the Affair.

I HAVE given you, Sir, a plain Narrative of the Fact : And now indulge me in a few Reflections upon our present Circumstances, not suggested by a blind Party-Zeal, but by an unaffected Regard to Truth, and a sincere well-grounded Affection to this University, to whose Interests I am so hardy as to confess myself most firmly attach'd. With Respect to the Views of these Gentlemen, a very small Degree of Penetration will give us a clear Insight into them. The honourable Profession of Informing, (for *honourable* they seem sollicitous to prove it) has in a late single Instance proved a very lucrative one too. *They* hope to meet with the same Success ; and, in Order to ensure it, are turned Pimps and Informers to that Prince of Informers equally detested by all Parties. They furnish him from Time to Time with Matter of general

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Abuse

Abuse rak'd from their own filthy hellish Plots; and occasionally intersperse the vilest Reflections upon the most respectable Characters in the Place. I know that when they have been expostulated with by some of their own Friends upon these truly diabolical Practices, they have only replied with great Coolness; "There is no Help for it; we must take all Advantages at such Times as these." But I would ask Mr. K---n---t, for Instance, why must the *University* (to which it is very well known he is indebted for every Morsel of Bread he eats) be so ungratefully and inhumanly sacrificed to his furious Zeal for what is called the *New-Interest*? Is it because he has so large a Wager depending upon the Event of the County-Election? Let him tell me, if he can, what Connection there is between the Principles of this University, and the Merits of that Election. Will it follow that, supposing we are a Nest of Jacobites, therefore the *Oxfordshire Freeholders* must be deprived of their Privileges as such?

He

He cannot surely entertain so mean an Opinion of the Judgment, Understanding, or Honesty, of a *British House of Commons*, as to suppose they will be influenced by such a palpable Piece of Sophistry. There cannot be conceived so daring an Insult upon the Wisdom and Integrity of that Honourable Assembly, as such an impudent Supposition would imply ; unless this same Gentleman were to petition, that in the Decision of this great Affair, of publick and national Concern, Regard might be had purely to his private Emolument ; and that the Candidates in the *New Interest* might be voted in *quo jure quaque injuria*, only because this humble and modest Petitioner, being likewise very poor, has a considerable Sum of Money depending.

AND with Regard to the *real Principles* of this University, they are such as will approve themselves to every honest unprejudiced Person in the Kingdom. Its very Opposers are satisfy'd of this, notwithstanding

withstanding they take such Pains to blacken and misrepresent them. They know, Sir, in their own Consciences, that we are most firmly and unalterably attach'd to the Church of *England*, and to its great Support, the Protestant Succession. They know that our Loyalty to his present Majesty is as untainted as our religious Principles. I speak from the very Bottom of my Soul when I charge them with being convinced of this; but such base Men pay little Regard to inward Conviction. It was previously agreed upon between the Gentlemen of a certain Interest in this County, that the stale Cry of *Popery* and *Jacobitism* should be revived to serve their present Purposes, and to facilitate their Success. But surely the *University* might have been spared upon this Occasion; for, in the Name of Wonder, how is this Cry supported? The whole Body is vilified and abused for the Action of a few inconsiderate young Fellows: And that very Action, now it has been searched to the Bottom, is found to be

be imputable to almost any Thing rather than Jacobitical Principles. But supposing the Charge upon *them* to be just, how often must it be insisted on to be a most flagrant Piece of Injustice, an absolute Contradiction to Common Sense, to make the University answerable for every single Action of each individual Member? If this Way of Reasoning be admitted in one Case, let it be admitted in all. Our Sister-University, it is well known, would then come in for her Share of the Charge of Disaffection. But we hope for her Sake, as well as our own, that such impotent Slander, such partial Accusations, will always meet with the Reception they deserve. In the mean Time we call upon them to prove one single Act of Disloyalty upon the collective Body. Even their subtle and malicious Inventions will, I may safely say, be puzzled to do this. But, 'till this *be* done, our Character as good Subjects, as well as in every other Respect, will stand unshaken and secure. The whole Herd
of

of Sycophants, let their Combination against the Place be never so strong, and their Efforts never so united, will in the End be baffled and confounded. Their reiterated Blows at its very Foundations will but the more powerfully engage every virtuous and impartial Man, every true Lover of Learning and his Country, in its Support; and so be the unwilling Means of establishing it the firmer:

—*Veluti annoso validam cum robore quercum
Alpini Boreæ nunc binc, nunc flatibus illinc
Eruere inter se certant; it stridor, & altè
Consternunt terram concusso stipite frondes:
Ipsa hæret scopulis; & quantum vertice ad
auras*

Ætherias, tantum radice in Tartara tendit.

VIRG.

AT the same Time it must be own'd it lies upon us, as we regard the good Opinion of the World in general, to wipe off those virulent Aspersions which have been successively thrown upon the Place, and parti-

particularly those upon the chief Magistrate in a late *Defence*. Too long a Delay may in such a Case, it is to be feared, be construed to our Disadvantage. A Consciousness of our own Innocence and Integrity may, it is true, help to deceive us into a blameable Security. In these Times, it must be confessed, an uncommon Degree of Circumspection and Activity is necessary. But *the Children of this World are in their Generation wiser than the Children of Light.* On the other Hand it must be conceived, we may have hitherto been partly restrained by a Tenderness for the Character of a certain Society, which has shewn so little to that of the whole University besides itself. Whatever Motive our Silence may be imputed to, the World may rest assured that strange Scenes of Iniquity will e'er long be brought to Light. Till which Time it can be no unreasonable Request to desire those who are inclined to think ill of us, to suspend their Judgment, and entertain as favourable an Opinion of this University, for the Sake

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of its *past* Services to the Publick, as the Credit of its Accusers will permit them to do. I am,

Dear Sir,

Your sincere Friend,

and humble Servant,

A. M.



F I N I S.

